



Mr. Chairman & Members of the  
Rural District Council.

This abbreviated form of Annual Report is in accordance with the recommendation of the Ministry of Health Circular 2773, dated 10th. March, 1943.

All records are kept, however, so that a comprehensive report of the war years will be available when hostilities cease. The subjects commented upon, and the order in which they appear, are suggested by Circular 10/44 from the Ministry of Health, dated 15th. February, 1944.

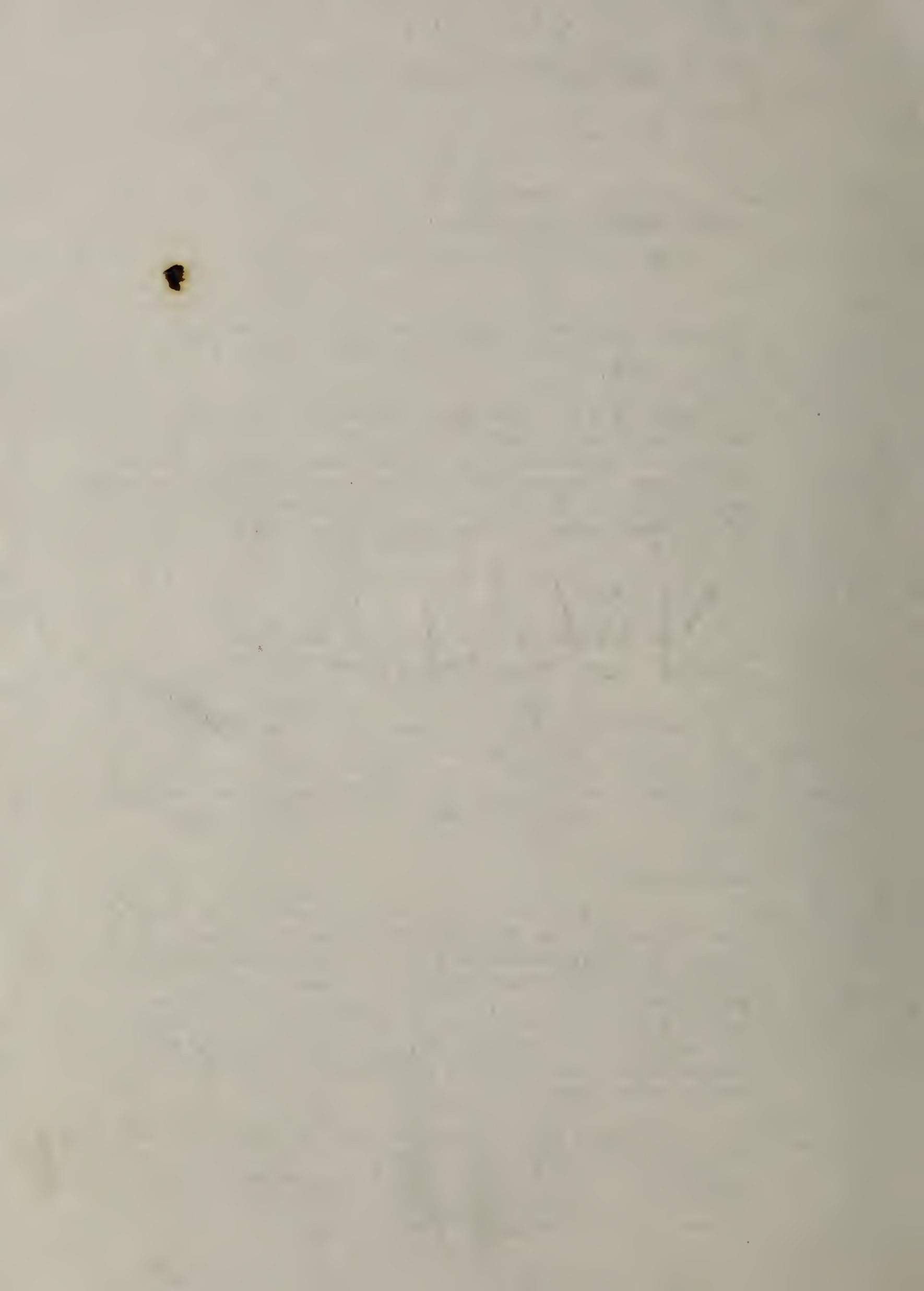
#### GENERAL HEALTH.

The health of the district has been maintained. There is no evidence that rationing of food has had any ill effect on nutrition. A possible benefit from rationing has been the wider choice of foods that everyone has been compelled to seek. New tastes must have been acquired by many. In the case of evacuee children from London, it is thought that they have been taught to appreciate fresh vegetable foods with beneficial results to themselves.

#### CLEANLINESS.

School children are under constant supervision and inspection by Health Visitors and School Nurses. Every child is examined, and in the case of those children who are habitually dirty, or who show evidence of neglect, the houses are visited and the parents encouraged to make improvements. Habitually neglectful parents are referred to the Inspector of N.S.P.C.C., and a visit from him will often have the desired effect.

Children whose heads are infested with lice, or on whose hair even a solitary nit is found, are treated at once by the School Nurse or Health Visitor who carries Lethane Oil or Emulsion of Benzyl Benzoate for that purpose.





## CLEANLINESS. (Contd)

Some children from nearby villages are sent to the Clinic at Exmouth, where a nurse attends twice weekly to treat such cases.

## TUBERCULOSIS & VENEREAL DISEASES.

The service for combating these diseases is administered by the County Authorities.

## DIPHTHERIA IMMUNISATION.

Immunisation has been continued throughout the year. It is undertaken for the most part by the private practitioners who receive a fee of 5/- per head for a completed immunisation of two doses with A.P.T. To assist in maintaining as large a percentage as possible, of immunised children, two monthly clinics were opened, one in Topsham and the other in Alphington. The response has been satisfactory. It is hoped to open similar facilities in other villages in the near future.

The following are the figures for 1943.

	<u>Aged under 5 years.</u>	<u>Over 5 years &amp; under 15 yrs.</u>
Number of children who completed the full course of immunisation.	84	30

In addition 2 Evacuees under 5 years.

4 Evacuees over 5 years and under 15 years.

TOTAL. 120.



### MATERNITY & CHILD WELFARE.

This service is conducted by the County Authorities and fortnightly clinics are held at Topsham and Alphington. The attendance is good at each centre, and the results of supervision and advice are all that can be desired.

### WATER SUPPLY.

St. Thomas Rural District contains 45 parishes. Of these 3 are partly supplied with water from Exeter City; 7 receive their water from boreholes; and 35 are supplied from neighbouring springs or wells. All the water supplied by main is chlorinated.

Except for those parishes supplied from Exeter and the few others supplied from boreholes, the amount available for the different parishes is inadequate and especially during drought, when many wells run dry and water has to be carted from a distance. The quality too is not satisfactory in most cases and instructions are issued at times, when the bacteriologist's report shows gross contamination, that all drinking water should be boiled. As 19 of the parishes have no public sewers and dispose of their refuse into cesspits, and the remaining parishes are only partly served by public sewers, there is unlimited opportunity for contamination of the various well supplies.

At some time in the future, a few of the parishes in the north western portion of the Rural District will be included in the North Devon water scheme and will receive a piped supply. The largest portion of the rural area, however, requires that safe and abundant supplies be made available to either individual parishes or to groups of parishes.

### INFECTIOUS DISEASE.

The incidence of infectious disease, has, with these exceptions, remained fairly constant.





INFECTIOUS DISEASE. (Contd)

5 cases of typhoid were reported in 1943 against 45 in 1942. The incidence of measles showed a great increase. 60 cases occurred in 1943 against 6 in 1942, but scarlet fever showed a slight decline, 33 cases occurring in 1943 against 43 in 1942.

SANITARY INSPECTION OF THE AREA.

This has been conducted under difficulties due to shortage of staff and to extra work thrown on the Department. Visits and inspections were carried out during the year. The greatest effort was devoted to milk and meat distribution. Tabulated details of the work done is available and will be published after the war.

Your obedient Servant,



Medical Officer of Health.

21st. October, 1944.

